

U.S. HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISOR FRANCES FRAGOS TOWNSEND
REMARKS DELIVERED AT EFFAT COLLEGE
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Salamu Aleikum.

Thank you, Dr. Ibrahim and staff, for inviting me to visit you and speak today. Effat College has a proud history and as you approach your 10th anniversary in 2009 you are living proof of what Johnetta Cole said: "When you educate a woman, you educate a great Nation."

Thank you, Princess Lulu, for that kind introduction. It is a special privilege to have you introduce me – not only because you are studying here, but because of the important work being done here in the Kingdom by your father, Prince Mohammed bin Nayif and the men of Mabahith to safeguard the security of the Kingdom.

For more than four years I have traveled to the Kingdom several times a year representing President Bush. As the President's senior counterterrorism advisor, I travel here and throughout the region to advance cooperation in the fight against terrorism. But I have spent more time in Saudi Arabia working with your officials than any other country in the world. And my Saudi colleagues are both strong partners and good friends.

It has been my privilege to be welcomed in Saudi homes, museums, archeological sites, the Rub el Khali, oil facilities, military installations, an orphanage, charities and medical facilities. I have had the opportunity to work with senior members of the Royal family but also with businessmen and women, doctors, professors, journalists, Shura Council members, parents of Saudi students studying in the U.S., directors of charities and those engaged in the National Dialogue. And though I have spent most of my time working on our shared security agenda, I have spent much time listening, watching and learning about Saudi culture, values and aspirations. This has been a great blessing and I must thank, His Majesty King Abdullah for permitting me such unfettered access in the Kingdom.

The relationship between our Countries long preceded me. Saudi Arabia is a key strategic ally of the United States and our partnership spans more than six decades across many important issues. But because of my travel here beginning in mid 2003 and our strong counterterrorism partnership – I have been blessed to witness an important chapter in the long history between our Countries.

Today I would like to share with you my perspective and observations. It is a story of courage and hope, struggle and loss, leadership and commitment on both sides. And though this will be a long fight against terrorism, because of what I have witnessed it is one that I am confident our two Countries will win. And we must win. I am a wife and mother of two young sons. We must win for them and for their future.

Today I would like to speak with you about the threat from terrorism and their dark, deviant ideology. How this evil is not based on Islam or any peace loving religion. And finally, how public support for this fight against terrorism is the only way to assure our victory.

Currently, the most serious and dangerous terrorist threat comes from Al Qaeda. But the threat does not reside in one group alone. Rather it emanates from a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks and individuals – their State and non-State supporters – which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism to pursue their ideological ends. They are not just America's enemy, they are the enemies of all those who espouse peaceful religious beliefs. They pursue a violent vision that is darkened by hate, fear and oppression. For these terrorists there is no peaceful coexistence with those who do not subscribe to their distorted world view. They accept no dissent. They tolerate no alternative points of view. The U.S., Saudi Arabia and civilized people everywhere face a terrorist enemy that threatens peace and prosperity and the right of all people to live free from fear of indiscriminate violence.

In 2005 during the Riyadh Counterterrorism Conference I told my international colleagues: *"The world cannot succeed in defeating global terrorism without Saudi Arabia's victory over terrorism and extremism on its own soil. We stand with the Saudis in that fight."* That statement continues to be true today and everyday. Mabath along with Saudi security and intelligence services have undertaken extraordinary efforts to defeat terrorists working here in the Kingdom and around the world. Let's look at how we fight this enemy.

Your security services have investigated and captured or killed hundreds who were plotting attacks in the Kingdom before they could act. Mabath eliminated the threats from all of the terrorists on the two Most Wanted Terrorist Lists. Millions of dollars have been seized or frozen in terrorist bank accounts. Charities no longer transfer money out of the Kingdom because terrorists have used those well-intended avenues meant for fulfilling your *zakat* obligation as a secret channel to support their terrorist activities. Saudi Arabia acted to stop these flows, but a determined enemy persists. Terrorists move cash across borders some cash moves when they enter the Kingdom claiming the right to perform *Hajj* or *Umrah*. Again, His Majesty acted – restricting the amount of cash that can cross your borders to and required a declaration to be filed with Finance Ministry officials. In addition, Saudi Arabia has joined in the designation of 10 terrorist financiers and supporters at the United Nations.

Mabath and your security forces have seized several tons of weapons and explosives before innocent lives were taken. Just to demonstrate how despicable the terrorists are

and their depth of depravity - in one case here in the Kingdom, terrorists defaced and destroyed the pages of a Holy Quran so that the then hollow book could be used to hide explosives. Those who commit these horrible acts claim they act in the name of Islam. This is impossible, they are *takfiris*. They are criminals responsible for the murder of innocent Muslims from Bali to Baghdad, in Kenya and Tanzania and here in the Kingdom. These criminals make victims of the innocent they kill and the peaceful religion of Islam which they dishonor.

Terrorists have attacked both your people and your resources. You have suffered attacks in Yanbu and Abqaiq. Again, His Majesty acted by establishing a new Facilities Security Force which will grow to be more than 35,000 strong. And the U.S. has worked with you to support this effort.

To Saudi Arabia's credit you have acted not only to protect yourselves but you have worked against our terrorist enemies around the world. Information gathered and shared by Mabath and your intelligence services have identified terrorist networks across the region including in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, not long ago information shared by Mabath with U.S. officials identified a suspicious network in the U.S. that we continue to investigate. Again Saudi Arabia's success has made the world safer.

But no security service – Saudi or American – can be successful without the support of its people. Saudi Arabia has undertaken a comprehensive public awareness campaign from billboards along roadways, to messages on your cash machine receipts and television shows to classroom education. I understand that there is an important effort underway to review school textbooks to ensure they promote religious tolerance and undercut extremist ideologies. The Grand Mufti's recent fatwa condemns extremism and the financial support of extremism, and his words are clear. These are all important aspects of how we must continue to fight against terrorism.

But fights like this one are costly. The high cost is not simply money, but most precious is the loss of life. Dozens of your most courageous security officials have been killed or wounded. Our terrorist enemies are so brutal they have targeted senior members of Mabath for assassination and in one recent case brutally murdered and beheaded a Mabath officer. These brave men leave behind wives and children – and those left behind are also victims of terrorism. The Ministry of Interior recognized that and established offices responsible for caring for the families of the martyrs and injured so that those families can continue to get the resources and attention that they need and deserve. The Ministry of Interior also created offices responsible for addressing the needs of the families of prisoners and detainees. This compassionate approach undercuts terrorists' attempts to exploit the families during this vulnerable time. The family who has lost their son to the grip of this violent, deviant ideology is also a victim. His mother also grieves for his return to her family and Islam.

When you measure the bravery of those men in the security forces who were murdered trying to protect the innocent against the evil of the terrorists who kill them it reminds us of the 32nd verse of the fifth Surah: *if anyone kills an innocent human being it is as*

though he killed all humanity; whereas if anyone saves a life it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind. Those in our military and security services around the world are fighting to protect all mankind of every faith from violence and evil. Each of us must continue to work together and with our intelligence and security services to protect humanity from evil.

We in the U.S. work with our Saudi colleagues everyday, we are equal partners: giving and receiving intelligence, law enforcement, financial and travel information. As in any close friendship we have at times suffered from frustrations and misunderstandings on both sides. That is to be expected and like all true friends we work through it because ours is a relationship of trust, confidence, respect and admiration. And our goal is the same – to defeat terrorism.

While this strong record of cooperation is impressive it is only a part of the story and it is the alternative to the terrorists' dark vision that King Abdullah has devoted himself to and is building throughout the Kingdom. This is the Saudi Arabia I have come to know beyond my counterterrorism responsibilities. Throughout my time here I have come to appreciate the generosity and kindness that defines who Saudis are as a people. I have looked on as His Majesty has traveled the Kingdom and committed Billions of dollars to infrastructure projects all over the Country. Today he opens the King Abdullah University of Science and technology and just last week His Majesty approved the establishment of 17 new colleges in various parts of the colleges, many of which will educate women in the areas of nursing, languages, engineering, and design. I visited a Saudi National Guard medical facility in Riyadh and visited with a group of women doctors who lead a project approved by His Majesty to raise awareness among doctors and nurses for woman and children who find themselves the victims of domestic abuse and violence. While I was there I visited a hospital ward sponsored by the charity and kindness of His Majesty and devoted to the separation of conjoined twins from around the world. When I visited there were Iraqi twins awaiting separation.

On my last visit to the Kingdom I had the privilege to visit the Prince Sultan Humanitarian City and learned of their work to improve the lives of those with serious physical disabilities. I have visited an orphanage where children find safety, education and hope for their future. I have visited Al Nahda and Al Manahil women's charities sponsored by women in the Royal family to provide job training and opportunity to women less fortunate. King Abdullah has approved an education reform program and a legal reform effort. The King's leadership has led to accession into the World Trade Organization and a vibrant market economy.

This is the Saudi Arabia I have come to know, the Saudi Arabia that I have had the privilege to work with and to witness. Saudi Arabia is not a country willing to accept the terrorists' dark vision on the contrary Saudi Arabia is strongly fighting against terrorism and offering a bright and hopeful future. It is a Country that fights fiercely against its enemies and is generous with those most vulnerable and in need. It has been an honor and I have learned a great deal about the importance of courage, leadership and vision - from my work with Prince Mohammed bin Nayif and Mabathith to defeat terrorism and from

seeing all that His Majesty, King Abdullah is doing to protect, improve and strengthen the Kingdom.

Let me finish by sharing a quote with you written by an American playwright that I keep in my top desk drawer at the White House. I keep it because although it was written about President George Washington but it reminds me of President Bush whose vision of freedom has led to the liberation of 50 million Muslims from tyranny and oppression in Iraq and Afghanistan. I share it with you because now, given all he has done for Saudi Arabia and those in need, it is a quote that applies to King Abdullah: *There are some men who lift the age they inhabit, till all men walk on higher ground in that lifetime.*